



# State of Indiana Indiana Horse Racing Commission

Mitchell E. Daniels, Governor

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## **Indiana Commission Bans Champion Driver for Two Years**

The Indiana Horse Racing Commission has handed down its most substantial penalty ever for a whipping violation.

Driver Josh Sutton has been suspended for six months and has agreed not to seek licensure in Indiana until June 20, 2009. A fine of \$2,500 has also been imposed.

Mr. Sutton was Indiana's leading driver at Hoosier Park's and Indiana Downs' 2006 race meets. He has been under suspension and has not participated in racing since May 20, 2007.

The penalty stems from Mr. Sutton's drive in the second race at Hoosier Park on May 19, 2007. Mr. Sutton inflicted severe multiple lacerations on his horse – "Staley Lane". A 10 inch snapper, four inches longer than the maximum permitted by Commission regulation, was found affixed to Mr. Sutton's whip.

The penalty was assessed by Executive Director, Joe Gorajec. Aggravating factors such as the severity of the lacerations and illegal snapper were considered in determining the penalty. Also taken into account was the fact that Mr. Sutton's 2007 harness driver's license was on probationary status due to numerous whipping violations in 2005 and 2006.

*"Mr. Sutton's actions constitute an inexcusable act of cruelty" stated Joe Gorajec, Executive Director. "The welfare of our horses and the perception and goodwill of our fans demand a significant penalty."*

The Indiana Horse Racing Commission has a history of diligent enforcement of its whipping regulations. The Commission Judges, led by its Presiding Judge, Tim Schmitz, have been proactive in ensuring strict compliance with all whipping regulations.

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